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ENGINEERING 'ROUND ABOUT COLUMBUS

By MERRILL WEED

Opening a Chestnut Bur

This story is a chestnut of engineering banquets, but good enough to be served again. It tells of the experience of the man who lived and died, and, as a reward of merit, was duly received in heaven. He found the magnificence he had expected, but a primitiveness of living and lack of comforts that amazed him. Accordingly he asked to be transferred to Hades. Here he found all manner of modern conveniences.

"How does this happen?" he inquired, "I supposed that Hades couldn't hold a candle to heaven."

"That used to be the case", was the answer. "Lately, however, a great many engineers have arrived here, and they have fixed the place up. It's improving all the time."

If, as some authorities tell us, the most heavenly feature of heaven is the ability to do what one really wants to do, constructive engineering work would make "a heaven of hell." Mother Earth is more promising material to start with. Though much remains to be done, this particular corner of the Vineyard has responded well to the ministrations of the engineers, and life in Columbus is pretty comfortable, through arctic winters and torrid summers, for three hundred thousand people and ten thousand students, more souls than would have filled all Ohio to overflowing with the means and the methods of the redskins. The working arrangements are well worth investigating. We hope you will find them as interesting as we have.

The notes we have written for the ENGINEER are only the suggestion of a guide book. The technical man, trained to see engineering features in the things he looks at, can make every stroll and every ride an inspection trip.

We've looked at the waterworks, source of ammunition for fire fighting and of the sparkling spring at every hydrant. That's merely the beginning. Dealing with a fire these days means more than squirting a few streams of water on the flames, and if you're interested you may look into the subject of chemicals and apparatus at one of the stations. That method beats breaking the glass in an alarm box and waiting for results. Better yet, visit the Seagrave Company and see them making the engines. And if studying other beverages intrigues you, you may see both pop and beer made, right here in Columbus.

The Engineer Bets the People's Money

No city could live without a way to dispose of its waste products, and that means a sewerage system, one of the knottiest of the tangles engineers are called on to un-

ravel. Such a maze of inlets and catch basins and pipes and manholes—no wonder Jean Valjean escaped through the labyrinth of the sewers of Paris. The engineers must plan every detail, in order that the rills will trickle and come together, and all wind up at the place where bad water can be turned into good, or at least passable, fluid.

The work is going on now in Columbus, as signs here and there indicate. All along the Olentangy is a collecting trunk for waste, cleverly made so spurting rain water will jump across it and reach the river without going through the disposal plant. In all parts of the city men are tunneling and digging ditches and putting in manholes to make the sewerage system something like what it should be.

The biggest part of the improvement is below town, along the Scioto River, where men and machines are working hard to install a disposal plant that is supposed to be the last word in such things. It's the activated sludge type, and it is expected to discharge our obligation to leave the stream at least decently unpolluted as it flows away from us.

The trouble is that sewage treatment is changing all the time. The engineers who planned Columbus' new plant have bet the people's money that this way is correct. We may all hope they didn't make a mistake.

While we're down the Scioto River we might go ten miles farther, following the line of steel towers and heavy wires, and visit the Pickaway station of the Columbus Railway Power and Light Company where most of the city's electric energy—and a great deal for the state at large—is generated. Or we might see the other plant at Groveport, or the muny station, or, closer still, the big generators and boilers on the University campus.

The smoke from the AIU tower these warm days doesn't indicate that the Deshler management is heating up cold-blooded guests. Not at all. The hotel has its own electric plant. So have other hotels and buildings in the city.

See What You Can See

Columbus is fortunate enough to have natural gas. You'll find that collecting that wonderful fuel, piping it, pumping it, and delivering it to the customers is a complicated problem and engineers have an important part in solving it.

The telephone company, always obliging, will allow you to inspect an exchange and see how your calls go through without a pleasant voice to say "Number?" and "Thank you." You can speculate on how many pairs of

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wires are in some of the big cables, and marvel at the use of gas as a leak detector.

Our government is one of the biggest employers of engineers. To get an idea of the work of engineers in public service look into some of the technical offices, particularly the State Highway Department, whose testing laboratory, by the way, is right here on the campus.

You may trace the railroad lines through Columbus—and don't miss seeing the crack trains that make this city regularly. You may visit many more factories than we've touched on in these notes: see the burly blacksmiths pounding links together at the Carroll Chain Company, molten metal pouring from the ladle at the Buckeye Steel Castings Company, the blasting and the crushing at the Marble Cliff Quarries. You may satisfy your curiosity as to whether Columbus baby beef is kosher killed, and what is lost besides the squeal at the packing plants. False teeth, glass, ice cream, coffins, shoes—all sorts of products—are made in Columbus, and with a little ingenuity you can get ringside seats to see the different processes.

Factory managers are sympathetic to the eagerness of youth, and the magic word "University" is a passport to most of the things you'll want to see. Even the workers seem not to mind being gazed at. But looking isn't all. State of mind has a great deal to do with it, and if you associate methods and processes, cause and effect, as an engineer should, you'll profit from inspecting engineering 'round Columbus—and everywhere you happen to be—and enjoy it hugely. Engineering is the profession where the most fun comes from doing, and the next keenest pleasure comes from knowing.

So good luck on your inspection trips.

The only difference between an engineers' picnic and a kangaroo is that the kangaroo provides its own hops.
